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## Book Notices

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### JASTROW'S RELIGION OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.<sup>1</sup>

This volume is the second of the series of "Handbooks on the History of Religions," of which the author, Professor Jastrow, is the editor. It is a worthy continuation of the series so ably begun by Hopkins with his *Religions of India* in 1895. It is especially welcome, since it is the first adequate treatise on this religion. Every history of Babylonia and Assyria has contained a brief sketch of the religion, but always in the merest outline. The treatment accorded the subject by Jeremias in Chantepie de la Saussaye's *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* is excellent, but too brief. Sayce's *Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians* was too chaotic and unreliable to be of real value even when first published, and is now by no means abreast of our knowledge. There are many excellent treatises on special topics, such as magic, the creation epic, life after death, etc.; but to bring the treatment of all these subjects into a single volume, and to bring the discussion of them as nearly up to date as one can (considering that it requires time to print a book), is a distinct service to Assyriology, as well as to the history of religion.

We are warned in the preface not to expect an exhaustive treatise, since the time for such a work has not yet come. The author endeavors rather to present the subject in compendious form, to bring our knowledge up to date, and to refrain from speculating about that which is uncertain. The last of these aims is not always easy of realization, especially in a subject our knowledge of which contains such gaps. Fortunately Professor Jastrow, though generally conservative in the matter, does not always deny himself the privilege of making conjectures. His book contains a number of suggestive hypotheses, put forth for the first time, which are worthy of the more consideration because of his usual self-restraint.

After a brief statement of the sources and method of study, a short chapter follows on the "Land and the People." Here the position taken with reference to the much-vexed Sumerian question is that from the earliest dawn of history the Semites were present in the Tigris-Euphrates valley; that probably other races were intermingled, making a composite culture, but that at a very early time the Semites dominated; and that Sumir and Akkad were employed as geographical rather than as national terms. Chaps. iii-xiv are devoted to the pantheon. This is considered

<sup>1</sup> THE RELIGION OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA. By Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph.D. (Leipzig), Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Pennsylvania. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1898. xii+730 pp.; 8vo. \$3.

under four historical divisions: Babylonian gods prior to the days of Hammurabi; the pantheon in the days of Hammurabi (in this division is included the history of the gods of Babylonia until its conquest by Assyria); the Assyrian pantheon; and the neo-Babylonian pantheon. This division of the subject has both its advantages and its disadvantages. By means of it the author is able to bring out clearly the historical development, with its syncretism, its displacement of the gods of conquered cities by those of the victorious cities, and the labors of the Babylonian schoolmen in shaping the mythology so as to reconcile the conflicting claims of different deities. Thus the way in which Marduk of Babylon supplants Bel of Nippur and Nabu of Borsippa, and absorbs attributes of Bel, Nabu, and Ea, is well set forth. In this presentation Professor Jastrow makes a valuable contribution to the elucidation of the subject. The disadvantages of this method of presenting the pantheon are that it necessitates repetition and makes the list of deities, which is sufficiently large under any circumstances, appear formidable to the uninitiated.

Chaps. xv-xxv are devoted to the various classes of religious literature, magical texts, prayers and hymns, penitential psalms, oracles and omens, accounts of the creation, the Gilgamesh epic, myths and legends; and to the zodiacal system of the Babylonians and the views of life after death. Each class of literature is described, its bearings on religious conceptions are pointed out, and illustrations of each are given in idiomatic translations. The extracts translated are well chosen and happily rendered. Frequently they are distinctly superior to previous renderings; *e. g.*, the extract of a magical text on p. 281 shows an improvement upon King's translation in his *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*. Sometimes—though such instances are rare—the rendering is an interpretation rather than a translation. For instance, on p. 288, in the last line but one, the rendering of di'u "insanity" seems too great a specialization. Delitzsch's "Elend" (*HWB.*, 207*a*) or Zimmern's "Seuche" (*Shurpu*, pp. 27, 66) seems preferable. However, where so much is most excellent, it is ungracious to be hypercritical!

In his treatment of the Babylonian cosmology Professor Jastrow happily analyzes the creation epic into a nature myth—suggested by the floods and storms which sweep over the Babylonian plains, when the sun is obscured and a conflict seems to be going on between the storm and the sun-god—and a work in glorification of Marduk. The material of the nature myth has, he thinks, been worked over by the Babylonian schoolmen and made the basis of a glorification of Marduk. Marduk, in the form of the poem known to us, replaces Bel of Nippur, who in an earlier recension of it was the conqueror of Tiamat. The development in the religious history which is exhibited in the earlier part of Jastrow's book makes this conclusion probable.

Professor Jastrow's treatment of the Gilgamesh epic contains, perhaps, his most original and valuable contribution to the elucidation of these religious and semi-religious texts. Some years ago I suggested in this

JOURNAL (Vol. X, p. 14) that there were different strata in this epic. Professor Jastrow has reached the same conclusion and has indicated the probable nature of these strata. The nucleus of the epic is, he thinks, to be found in the legendary tales of Gilgamesh, a hero who has been deified. To this there has been engrafted: (1) The story of Eabani, the primitive man who lives in a state of blissful wildness with the animals—a state from which he is enticed by woman. Eabani corresponds in a general way, he thinks, to Adam among the Hebrews. (2) There was also attached to the Gilgamesh legend a nature myth, which he finds in the sixth tablet, where the goddess Ishtar offers herself in marriage to Gilgamesh. (3) There was also added to these the story of the flood in the eleventh tablet—a narrative originally independent and itself composed of two separate strata, one an account of the destruction of the city Shurippak, the other a myth founded on the annual phenomenon of the overflow of the Euphrates. (4) Lastly, in the twelfth tablet, scholastic philosophy takes hold of the Gilgamesh tale and makes it the medium of illustrating the problem of the secret of death. This analysis is very suggestive, and though now and then one would interpret a detail a little differently, as a whole it commends itself.

Chap. xxvi is devoted to the temples and the cult. Here the author strikes into a field largely unworked before. The facts which he brings together as to the form of the temples, the purposes of the different parts of the sacred inclosure, the priesthood and the sacrifices are a most welcome beginning of the history of an obscure subject. The history closes with a sympathetic estimate of the value of the Babylonian-Assyrian religion, and the book is concluded with an excellent bibliography of the subject.

This volume lays a wide circle of scholars under obligation to its author. One cannot realize, unless he has endeavored to work in some little corner of the large field which Professor Jastrow covers, the amount of industry, patience, and acumen necessary to the production of such a work. The author is to be congratulated upon having accomplished so difficult a task so well. I have noted but few errors. The statement on p. 203, that Ishtar of Arbela does not make her appearance in the historical texts till the time of Esarhaddon, is one of these. The fact is overlooked that the Taylor cylinder shows that she was a member of Sennacherib's pantheon. Cf. I Rawlinson 41, 50. Again, on p. 661, it would have been well in discussing sacrifice to note that a text of Esarhaddon proves that the commensal idea of sacrifice, demonstrated for primitive Semitic peoples by W. R. Smith, persisted in Assyria. Esarhaddon says (I R. 47, col. vi, 27 *sqq.*): "Assur (and) Ishtar of Nineveh, the gods of Assyria, all of them into it (the palace) I invited; large, pure sacrifices I offered before them, I presented my present. These gods in the faithfulness of their hearts drew near unto my royalty. The princes and people of my country all of them at the banquet and feast at the festive table I made to sit." A feast is then described. Should not this passage help us to determine "how far the Semitic dwellers in the

Euphrates valley were influenced by primitive conceptions of sacrifice"? Such points will, no doubt, be corrected in the future editions, which will be necessary if the work receives the appreciation which it merits. It is alike necessary to the Assyriologist, the Old Testament scholar, and the student of comparative religion.

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### GESENIUS' HEBREW GRAMMAR.<sup>1</sup>

The task of the reviewer of this book is simply that of testing the faithfulness of the translation to the original text. The conception of what a good translation should be varies all of the way from a close literal rendering to that of a free breaking-up and practical reconstruction of the original text, preserving, at the same time, the substantial sense of that original. The fact of this wide divergence in the conception of a translation should insure large charity on the part of a critic of such work.

The stupendous amount of labor connected with the translation and publication of such a book as this is far beyond the conception of most literary workers. A minute examination of this translation alongside of the original, through several long sections, reveals the fact that the translators used large liberties with the original, freely breaking up and reconstructing the text on the basis of the sense. Slight slips here and there, like the leaving out of a word, or the addition of a word, scarcely merit notice. It is interesting to note how closely this translation of the syntax runs alongside of that of Mitchell's translation of 1893. Often the wording is precisely the same; again the sentence, which in Mitchell may be too literal and stiff, is broken up and given an easier form. Again, one or two synonyms only mark the difference between the two. A translator's task is always lightened by the existence of a predecessor's work. While the sense is substantially the same in almost every instance in the syntax, this is, as a rule, an easier and freer rendering of the original into English, and carries with it the few additions found in the twenty-sixth edition.

One of the troublesome questions which meet every translator is that of how to reproduce the references and quotations. The only reasonable method is to make as much of the material as possible accessible to the readers for whom a translation is made. Consequently all references to books should give the title of the book just as it reads on the book, and in the language in which the book is written. The titles of articles which exist only in other than the English language should follow the same rule. But in a translation designed for English readers, reference should be made to the *English* edition, if such occurs. On p. 2, note 1, also on p. 3, l. 11 from the bottom, we find English titles for articles

<sup>1</sup> GESENIUS' HEBREW GRAMMAR, as edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, Professor of Theology in the University of Halle. Translated from the Twenty-fifth German Edition by the late Rev. G. W. Collins, M.A.;\*the Translation Revised and Adjusted to the Twenty-sixth Edition by A. E. Cowley, M.A. Oxford: *The Clarendon Press*, 1898; New York: *Henry Frowde*. xviii + 598 pp. \$5.25.